

IN THE NEWS!

Ananda Aspen, Diagnostic Center Central

International News!



The Wakefield/Lancet story

- MMR is the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine which was introduced in the late 1980s
- In 1998 the Lancet published a study, led by Dr Andrew Wakefield, which linked the jab with autism and bowel disease
- It has since been discredited and the Lancet has said it should not have run it
- A newspaper subsequently made allegations about the way the research was carried out
- The GMC launched an investigation, which then led to a series of charges and the two-and-a-half-year hearing



Secrets of the MMR scare



Although scientific research supports the conclusion that there is no correlation between autism and childhood vaccinations, the Wakefield misinformation continues to be promoted...

Dr. Andrew Wakefield

- His hypothesis was that by combining the MMR into a single shot that it was somehow weakening the immune system, causing the measles part of the vaccine to travel to the gut and cause damage
- That theoretical damage, according to Wakefield's hypothesis, could then theoretically travel into the bloodstream and cause (theoretical) damage to the brain -- perhaps causing autism symptoms.



MMR in parliament: On March 15 2004, Dr Evan Harris MP called a brief parliamentary debate, during which he took up the ethical issues raised in Brian Deer's investigation: whether a battery of potentially hazardous tests on autistic children were justified. He said he believed the issues could be as serious as how the public had been misled by the discredited Lancet paper's claims. Hansard

GMC inquiry: After the submission of Brian Deer's evidence to the **General Medical Council**, the British doctors' regulatory body announced that it would hold a formal public inquiry into Wakefield's conduct. **The Sunday Times, December 12 2004.** Later, the paper revealed the **preliminary charges**, including dishonesty and intending to mislead. **The Sunday Times, September 11 2005**

Post perspective: Among the extensive international reportage of the MMR investigation was a long and detailed account in the Washington Post by distinguished journalist Glenn Frankel. Among his findings was a plan by Wakefield to move his crusade to Texas where, according to one source, his "entrepreneurial spirit" will find "fertile ground" in US privatized health care. **Washington Post**

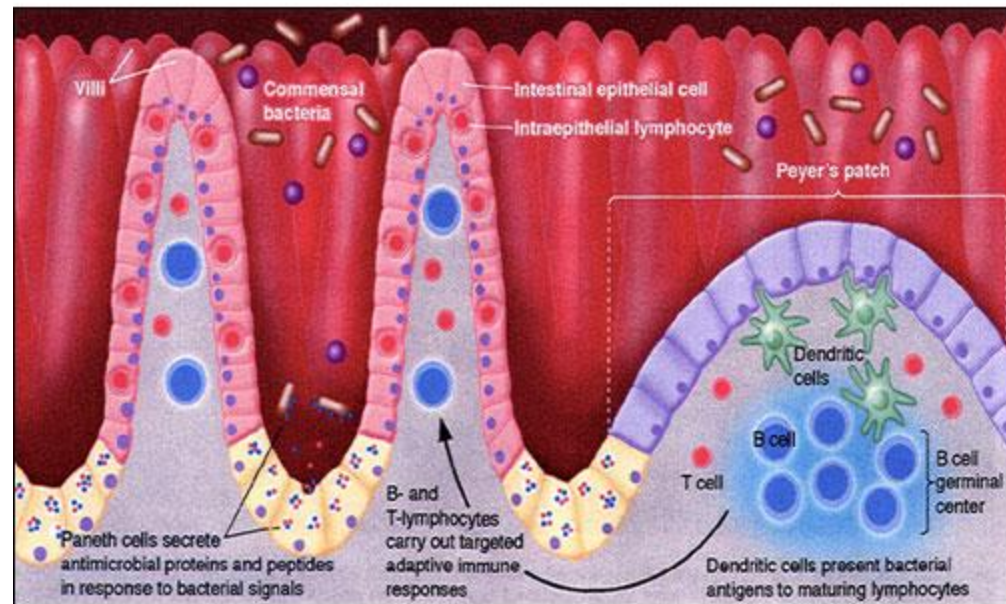
Payments revealed: Late in the investigation by **Brian Deer**, huge payments to Wakefield were revealed by the Legal Services Commission, responding to a Freedom of Information Act request from Deer. In December 2006, the commission released a table, showing fees to

- **Brian Deer (journalist)** writes that the medical establishment closed ranks to protect their fellow health care professional - Dr. Wakefield - after Deer raised concerns in **2005** regarding the *Lancet* paper.



The mystery deepens

- **Brian Deer** reveals a secret scheme to raise huge sums from a campaign, launched at a London medical school, that claimed links between MMR, autism, and bowel disease



Wakefield not retracting research...

- Wakefield dismissed Brian Deer, the writer of the British Medical Journal articles, as "a hit man who has been brought in to take me down" by pharmaceutical interests. Deer has signed a disclosure form stating that he has no financial interest in the business.



conclusion

- Wakefield's research is ridden with likely research fraud, conflicts of interest through an involvement with a lawsuit against vaccine makers, and unethical treatment of susceptible children, Deer alleges.
- What do you think?
- news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8485165.stm



NATIONAL NEWS!

NATIONAL NEWS!



Sibling spacing may be tied to autism risk

- A new study suggests that kids who are born only a year or two after an older sibling might be more likely to be diagnosed with autism than those with a bigger age gap.



Other explanations

- "There's one possible explanation, (which) is that there is some biological factor" such as a mother's nutrient levels or stress that makes a second child more at risk for autism when siblings are closely spaced, Dr. Keely Cheslack-Postava reported
- Another explanation "is just better diagnosis and better picking up on symptoms," Cheslack-Postava said, "in which case it would be an advantage to be more closely spaced."
 - ▣ [Reuters Medical]



- The study does not prove that spacing children closer together causes autism in the second sibling, and Cheslack-Postava said there are many possible ways to explain the link - and that she "can't speculate as to what's the most likely."
- One possible explanation is that mothers who got pregnant soon after giving birth the first time had low levels of certain nutrients like iron and folate, or that their bodies were still under stress from the first pregnancy, and that affected the second child's development.



LOCAL NEWS!



April Autism Forum

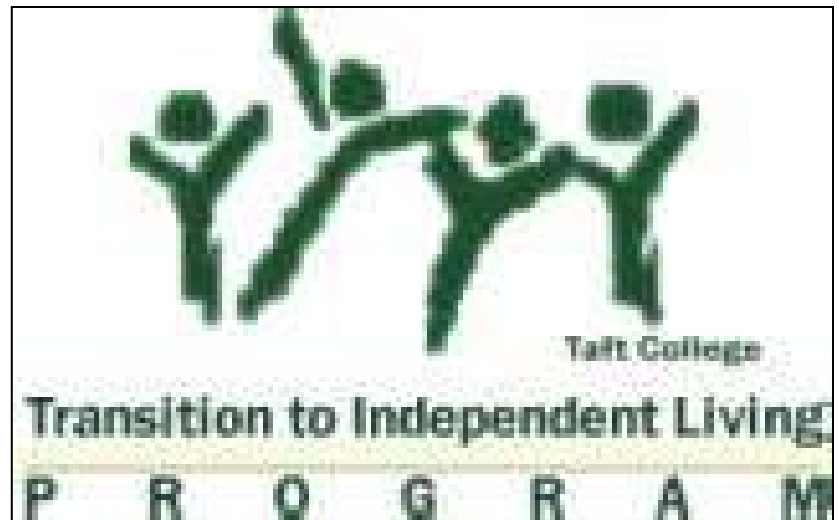
- ▣ April 29th, Ashley Auditorium
- ▣ Guest Speakers
- ▣ Ask the Doctor
- ▣ Hot Topics
- ▣ In The News
- ▣ And more!

Transition to Independent Living (TIL)

- The TIL Program at Taft is a two-year residential program that began in 1996.
- The program has a proven track record, with 82 percent of its graduates living independently.
- Currently, one third of the TIL students have autism, and the staff at TIL expects to see the demand increase as more and more individuals with autism transition to adulthood.
- Jeff Rose, the Director of Student Support Services, said that this year, **one out of every two** applicants seeking admission to the program is an individual with autism.

Taft Community College

- TIL brings students to campus for a two-year live-in program that trains them to live on their own.
- Nearly every graduate – 95 percent – currently live independently and 89 percent of those have jobs.
- The community college chancellor's office is so impressed, the state is funding almost entirely a new campus home for the TIL program.



Autism Society of America

- Local chapter is recruiting members:
 - ▣ Parents, professionals, community
- **Program Information**
- Hours of operation:
 - ▣ Autism Society of Central California meets every 2nd Thursday from 7-9 pm at the Central Valley Regional Center 4615 N. Marty, Fresno, CA
- Area served:
 - ▣ We are located in the Central San Joaquin Valley which is in the center of California

- To contact:
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